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SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bruning.

SENATOR BRUNING: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I want to make a few short comments, and then if Senator Kristensen wants the remainder of my time, if he's...the poor guy is not so out of breath after having had to speak all day. At this point, or at least in February, 21 states were considering the Universal Service Fund, as far as a state fund; 21 states were considering it, so we're not alone. It is something everybody has got to think about. Now, Senator Chambers, you questioned why do we say that the federal order, that's going to come out on May 8th, to talk about universal service is going to be 500 or 1,000 pages, why do we say that? Well, think about this, in August, the FCC put out its order to implement local competition, as per Section 254 of the act. The bill was signed February 8th, 1996, by President Clinton. In August, the FCC issued the regs to deal with opening competition up, it was 1,000 pages; 1,000 pages, killed several trees just for this one order from the FCC. The joint board, which was made up of commissioners and staff across the country to determine how to handle just the universal service part of that is only one part of that, issued its recommendations in November. That was 500 pages. So I don't think there is much of a question that this is going to be a mammoth document when it comes out. Let's talk about the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Task Force, how are they preparing to deal with May 8th, when the federal...when the FCC issues its regulations? How are they prepared to deal with May 8th? Well, they have scheduled at this point, it's my understanding they've scheduled three meetings just to go over this monster document that is going to come. May 20th through 22nd, June 17th through the 19th, and July 8th through the 10th, that's just to figure out what the thing says. So if we bracket this until May 8th, we are not going to know anything May 8th. We are not even going to know enough probably June 8th to deal with it, and June 14th we're out of session. There just isn't time. The question you need to ask yourself is, do I care about folks who live in less densely populated areas? Do I care if they have a phone? Do I care if access charges drop through the floor and these phone companies can't make it, and these people may be left without a phone? If you care about folks who live in less densely populated areas, and I know we all do, I mean certainly that's a rhetorical question, nobody is going to say